



BY MIRIAM STUDLEY

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might bring on the same judgments."

He was referring to the Biblical story of a pestilence which the Lord sent after King David had made an enumeration of Israel and Judah following the death of Absalom. In spite of the religious scruples of the people Governor Burnet succeeded in taking a census in 1726, and there was one in 1737, another in 1745.

THE 1790 census of the United States was taken for a very specific purpose, the appointment of representatives in Congress. But the law establishing it provided also for a count of males of 16 and over, boys under 16, all women, all free persons of color, and all slaves.

The United States has the distinction of being the second Western nation to take a census of all its inhabitants, Sweden being the first. Not till 10 years later did the other countries of Europe follow the example of these two.

The machinery of the first census was simple. The United States Marshal in each judicial district was ordered to take the census of his state.

The Federal census of 1790 was not the first numbering of the inhabitants of New Jersey. The British Board of Trade interested itself in statistics concerning the American colonies and asked the colonial governors at various times for a count of their subjects. Governor William Burnet of New Jersey reported to the Board of Trade in 1726 his doubts of the wisdom of census taking. "I was afraid it might make the people uneasy, they being generally of New England extraction, and Enthusiasts and that they would take it for a repetition of the same sin that David committed in numbering the people and

judicial districts and Essex coincided, and the marshal was an officer of the Federal court system. Each marshal was allowed to hire as many assistants as he required, paying them at the rate of \$1 for every 300 persons enumerated in cities and towns of over 5,000 inhabitants, and \$1 for every 150 persons in county districts. Essex County at this period had an estimated population of 17,000.

There was some opposition to the taking of the census in 1790, not just on religious grounds, but because people feared increased taxation as a result. Newark papers of the period were full of news of the tax raising activities of

Statistics on state's population took up only three pages in bound volume of 1790 census held by Miss Helen De Vita, who is in charge of Public Library's U. S. document collection. A page (left) shows Newark grouped with "Acquacknack" and Elizabethtown to form Essex County. Map (below) shows location of city's founding families in 1666. Huge 16th census taken in 1940 fills shelves of bookstore pictured near Miss De Vita.



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THE CENSUS

(Cont'd from Preceding Page)

weaving cloth to the value of \$160,000. Eighty-two distilleries did a business worth more than \$150,000, carriages were built worth \$129,500, and 26,150 fur hats had a value of \$78,480. There were 10 paper mills, 17 bloomeries (iron furnaces), three naileries and a blast furnace.

It was at this period that the famous "Shoemaker Map" of Newark was published by Charles Bashan, a teacher in the Newark Academy. Under the little design of a shoemaker at his last, beside the state seal over which the American eagle hovers, is the following "blurb" worthy of a modern chamber of commerce:

"Newark is one of the most pleasant and flourishing towns in the United States. It is on the main road between New York and Philadelphia, nine miles from the former and 87 from the latter. Its stone quarries are visited by travelers from curiosity. It is noted for its cider, the making of carriages of all sorts, coach lace, men's and women's shoes. In the manufacture of this last article one-third of the inhabitants are constantly employed."

Hard times following the War of 1812 hit urban New Jersey very hard. Banks failed, business and manufacture stagnated. In the 1820 census, Essex County dropped below Sussex, and Newark reported but 6,607 inhabitants. In 1823 the Federal Government published a "Digest of accounts of manufactures Established in the United States." The picture of manufacturing was a gloomy one, but the tables give a view of a diversified economy which had in it the seeds of recovery.

Among our leading products were binders' boards, elder brandy, wool and cotton goods, copper sheets, flour



In an Essex County "nailery" around 1823 census.

and meal, leather, paper of all kinds and sail cloth. All but one of the looms in the nine cotton factories in the county were run by water power. At the looms worked 83 men, 35 women and 240 boys and girls. No child labor laws existed in that day.

In the manufacture of sail cloth, 60 boys and girls worked alongside 14 women and 76 men. Not long after that, a congressman from New Jersey speaking for the protective tariff emphasized the evil of competing with European factories where children went into industry at the age of 4.

THE local census records taken between 1817 and 1823 by Isaac Nichols, Newark tax assessor, are in the possession of the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark. They were found in an old chest in the attic of the Nichols homestead, 313 Washington street, in February, 1923. Now torn down, the house was built between 1797 and 1799 by Mr. Nichols and occupied by four generations of his family.

It was Isaac Nichols who made the first accurate census of Newark industry. The results were made public on that famous Independence Day of 1826 when Seth Boyden discovered malleable cast iron.

Taken with great care, Nichols' record of industries

and employment is probably thoroughly accurate. Any one who did not know Newark's location on a cross-roads would suspect it from Mr. Nichols' statistics for there were about 250 of Newark's 8,017 people employed in various branches of carriage and wagon making. Leading employment was shoe making with 685 employees. There were 57 saddlers, 12 saddle-tree makers, 70 halters and seven trunk makers.

As was customary in those days representatives of the leading industries of Newark marched in the Fourth of July parade bearing the tools of their trades. Thereafter a Newark census was taken at regular intervals between the decennial census years of the United States, in 1830, the year of the City Charter, in 1845, and every 10 years thereafter, through 1875. A New Jersey state census was taken every 10 years from 1855 through 1905.

SEPARATE figures for Newark as a city have been taken by the United States census enumerators ever since the incorporation in 1836. Percentages of increase have been computed since 1830, showing the astounding increase of 125 per cent from 1840 to 1850. Newark continued to gain, but gradually more and more slowly, until between 1830 and 1840 we actually lost in population. It will be interesting to see what 1950 brings.

The scope of the United States census has grown to the point where the amount of information one may gain about Newark from the published reports is astonishing. Do you want to know the average number of people in each household in a given section of Newark? Or where in Newark you may find the homes of people of Mexican birth? Perhaps you want to know how many factories in Newark are making radios, radio tubes and phonographs, and the number of people employed here in such work.

All these and many other facts may be learned from the United States census of 1940, and the census of manufactures of 1939. All these, and many more facts will be compiled by the census takers of



Felting of hats as done in Newark in the 1800s.



Growing Newark—Broad St. at southern end of Military Park before 1880s...

Congress, and the development of the U. S. Treasury Department. Perhaps in many places the county sheriffs, working under the U. S. Marshal, employed local tax assessors as enumerators.

WHEN Governor William Franklin ordered a New Jersey census taken in 1772 the count was to be made by the assessors under the direction of the county sheriffs. That census was never completed. Several times, when Newark took its own local census, the assessor was in charge.

The first Federal census was started on August 1, 1790, and completed in the Spring of 1791. The returns came in to the marshal on scraps of paper four inches to three feet in length. Col. Thomas Lowrey, U. S. Marshal, then living in Frenchtown, Hunterdon County, forwarded them to President George Washington at the capital in New York City. The "Federal City" later named Washington, was still in the planning stage.

Irish-born Col. Lowrey, a self-made man and a land speculator, was an intense patriot, and a personal friend of Gen. Washington. He took the census for New Jersey of 1800, but died in 1809, before the third census was taken.

It seems strange to us now, living in the greatest city of this state, to think of so important an official living in what has always been a rural area. But in the 18th Century the whole state was rural, and in 1790 Hunterdon was the most populous

county, followed by Sussex. The fertile wheat fields of Hunterdon County, and the huge farm families of 11 and 12 children gave it a leading position in the state. Its thriving settlements of Flemington and Trenton were important stops on the stage coach routes between New York, Philadelphia and the Delaware Water Gap.

Essex County, though small, was fourth in population. Union County did not then exist, and the returns for Essex County included the three towns of Newark, "Acquacknack," and Elizabethtown. Passaic County had not been set apart either, and the present cities of Passaic and Clifton were included in Essex County as "Acquacknack."

BETWEEN the first and the second census, the bridges across the Passaic at Newark and at Belleville were constructed. Roads were much improved, and Essex County grew rapidly. By 1800 Essex was the second most populous county in the state, being excelled only by Sussex County whose iron mines and farms produced heavily for Newark markets and industries. No separate count of the towns was taken, but Newark made an estimate of its own population, set at 4,500.

It was a Hunterdon County man, Oliver Wayne Ogden, who took the census of 1810. A physician with a successful practice in New Germantown, now Oldwick, he was a descendant of the "Elizabethtown Ogdens," and had prac-

ticed also at Perth Amboy. He succeeded for a few years in keeping up his practice, acting as marshal, and at the same time taking the 1810 census of New Jersey. Eventually, before the 1820 census which he also supervised, he had to devote full time to his official duties, giving up the practice of medicine.

In 1810 Essex had become the most populous county, Sussex and Burlington following it. The populous farming counties of Sussex and Hunterdon were rapidly being drained of their surplus population by immigration to Central New York and to Pennsylvania where soil was easier to work and land cheaper. Over all the highways rolled the Conestoga wagons, carrying farmers' sons and daughters westward.

The 1810 volume of 90 pages containing population figures gives the town of Newark 8,008 inhabitants. Tench Cox, eminent statistician of Philadelphia, compiled the census of manufactures printed in 1813. Admitted by its compiler to be full of inaccuracies, it shows nevertheless an interesting picture of industrial activity in Essex County, separate figures for Newark not being given. Goods to the value of \$1,169,871 were produced in the county, richest industry being that of shoemaking, with 324,775 pairs a year and a value of \$400,000.

Over 750 looms were busy in the homes of Essex County.

(Continued on Following Page)



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